(a) whether the Government propose to strengthen the Railway Protection Force, which is facing severe manpower crunch and antrust it the work of safety of passengers and their luggage;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) to (c) The question of strengthening the Railway Protection Force (RPF) is under consideration. The creation of four additional Batallions of RPSF is under examination. This will help the Railway Protection Force to pay better attention to problems like ticketless travel, unauthorised alarm chain pulling as well as guarding of additional assets like new sheds, store depots, goods trains, passenger/mail/express trains and providing aid to civil power on occasions like Parliamentary/State elections and in hours of national crises. In addition, it is also proposed to increase the mobility of the Force, introduce modern security gadgets enhance training facilities, computerise data and improve communication network. These requirements have been projected in the Ninth Plan paper. There is, however, no proposal to entrust the Railway Protection Force with the work of safety of passengers and their luggage in view of the fact that 'Police' is a State subject, and, therefore, maintenance of Law and Order and control of crime on Railway premises, including Railway stations and running trains, is the responsibility of the State Governments concerned, which they discharge through their Government Railway Police (GRP). The duties of RPF and GRP are quite distinct and are not interchangeable. Hence, it is not possible to dispense with the GRP and entrust their duties and responsibilities to Railway Protection Force, so long as the present Constitutional provisions are in vogue.

[Translation]

Law and Order in Bihar

5037. SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have received any request from the Government of Bihar for making available twenty companies of the security personnel to maintain Law and Order in Bihar;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the action taken by the Government thereon;

(d) the reasons for delay in making the said companies available to the Government of Bihar; and

(e) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR): (a) to (e): A request was received in June, 1996, from the Government of Bihar for providing 20 coys of CRPF for a period of 2 months for conducting a Special Drive before the rainy season to check the activities of various gangs. However, due to non-availability of CPMFs and pressing commitments elsewhere (including J&K and the North East), it was not found possible to meet the requirement. No further request has been received, in this Ministry, from the State Government.

[English]

Fish Farmers Development Agencies

5038. SHRI MAHESH KANODIA:
SHRI N.J. RATHVA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Fish Farmers Development Agencies set up in Gujarat so far;

(b) the Central assistance given to these agencies during each of the last three years;

(c) whether the Government have reviewed the performance of these Fish Farmers Development Agencies;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether thousands of fishermen families are facing difficulties in eking out their living due to decline in the quantum of fish catching in the State; and

(f) if so, the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to remedy the situation?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (EXCLUDING THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING) (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) Seventeen Fish Farmers Development Agencies (FFDAs) have been set up in Gujarat so far.

(b) The Central assistance given to FFDAs in Gujarat during the last there years in as stated below:

1993-94	1994-95	1995-96
Rs. 17.00 lakhs	Rs. 17.00 lakhs	'Nil'

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. A review of the performance of FFDAs in Gujarat indicates that all the 17 FFDAs are in operation. They have so far brought under fish culture a water area of 30,401 ha. and have trained a total of 11,846 fishermen. The number of beneficiaries so far under this scheme is 12,794 in Gujarat.